

CONSERVING, PRESERVING & ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT

A SELF-DESCRIBED “TEDDY ROOSEVELT REPUBLICAN,” SENATOR MCCAIN BELIEVED AMERICA’S LANDS AND WATERWAYS MUST BE PRESERVED FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS, AND CHAMPIONED LEGISLATION TO ENHANCE THESE NATIONAL TREASURES.

Preserving Arizona’s Lands, Parks & Waterways

Protecting the Grand Canyon was central to his work as a legislator and conservationist. Senator McCain authored the landmark [Grand Canyon Protection Act](#), which regulates releases from Glen Canyon Dam that today are restoring endangered fish populations and natural sandy beaches that were once vanishing from the canyon bottom. He also championed the [National Parks Overflights Act](#), which created a federal mandate for natural quiet and safer air tours over Grand Canyon National Park.

As an avid outdoorsman, Senator McCain hiked Canyon de Chelly, Chiricahua, the Grand Canyon rim-to rim, and many other trails and hidden paths in the Arizona backcountry. He rafted the Colorado River, boated on Lake Powell with his family, and experienced many spectacular destinations in Arizona. Inspired by his friend and mentor, the late Congressman Morris K. Udall, Senator McCain built consensus among the Arizona congressional delegation to ensure passage of the [Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990](#), which protected in perpetuity 2.5 million acres of pristine wilderness lands across Arizona. He spearheaded [legislation](#) to expand Saguaro National Park and the Petrified Forest, and led the Arizona delegation in placing the 807-mile [Arizona Trail](#) under the protection of the National Park Service

Senator McCain also advocated for the restoration of Arizona’s forest ecosystems threatened by wildfire, worked to preserve the [Verde River](#), and authored [legislation](#) to save the Upper San Pedro River—one of the last free-flowing rivers in the desert southwest.

The Rio Salado Reimagined

In 2017, Senator McCain spearheaded the [Rio Reimagined](#) project in partnership with Arizona State University with the goal of revitalizing the Salt and Gila Rivers of the greater Phoenix metro area. Under his leadership, he built a coalition of cities located along the rivers, including Mesa, Tempe, Phoenix, Avondale, Goodyear, and Buckeye, as well the Gila River and Salt River

Pima-Maricopa Indian Communities, the State of Arizona and Maricopa County, which are providing critical support for the project. This broad coalition is working to bring Senator McCain's vision to life by building a public amenity in the Valley that would include ecosystem restoration, environmental conservation, as well as commercial, recreational and workforce development.